My Name Vignette Summer Assignment

In *Anthem*, names are connected with ideas of identity. The characters are given names and they even give each other names. A name is a powerful thing. They are the first thing we say when we meet someone. The first thing our parents say when they need our attention or they are calling us down. The first thing we are given when we enter this world. They carry meaning both personal and literal.

As an introduction to Freshman Composition, we will be writing a name *vignette* (a brief description or account). In this vignette, you will introduce yourself by exploring the meaning of your name and its origin. Tell me about your name. What does it mean? Do you know how you got your name? Were you named after a specific person? Is there a story behind it? Do you have any nicknames? What does it mean to your family? To you? Give me as much detail as possible behind why you have your name and what it means.

This vignette was inspired by Sandra Cisneros’s “My Name” from *The House on Mango Street*. As you read her vignette, think about how she organizes her thoughts and connects them together. Use her sample and mine as a guide, but do not feel like you have to copy them. You will find a sample outline below that you can use to help you organize your thoughts, but it is not required.

The purpose of this assignment is for me to learn more about you and your writing. Do not feel pressure to be perfect. Give your best effort and have fun with it!
“Misspelled” by Ms. Strickland

In English, my name means purity. In my family, it means music, a big heart and big sister. It was my great great-grandmother’s name (well, sort of) and now it is mine. Carrie Mae Canipe. She was a strong-willed woman. A good storyteller with a kind heart and a big imagination. Lived till she was 99. Strong mind. Full life.

My great-grandmother. She was a character. A story for every occasion. Told jokes that only men in her time would have dared. Made more people cry from laughter than from fear. She had a heart two times too big and enough hardships to make her strong. Raised her grandchildren when her daughter decided to pave her own path. Supported a husband who cared more about the bottle than the bills. She was the rock on which all else was built. I strive to live up to a name like hers.

And the story goes that when my parents told her they wanted to name me after her, she told them she had never liked the way it was spelled. She thought C-A-R-R-I-E was boring and didn’t want that named passed on to any child. Because of that, my name became, Kari, K-A-R-I. When my parents proudly told her that they have given me her name, they spelled it out and she quickly told them that they had not named me after her because they had spelled it differently. I will never know if it was forgetfulness from old age or another one of her elaborate jokes.

Regardless, I am Kari. K-A-R-I. I’ve been mistakenly called CARy and Kara, and one professor even called me Karl for a full three weeks until he finally stopped taking role. I have met only two people who spell their name like me, and I only know of three. One happens to be my favorite music artist- Kari Jobe. She sings like an angel and I can’t stop singing, but I digress.

At home, I am Kari or Kari-Lizz. To my friends, I am K-Strick, Kare Bear, KDawg, Kar or just Kari. To my students, I am Ms. Strickland, Ms. Strick or Coach. But, I am always Kari. Daughter of Joey and Denise. Great great-granddaughter of Carrie Mae Canipe — warrior, storyteller and rock. Regardless of spelling.
My Name From The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing.

It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse—which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female—but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name Magdalena—which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least—can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza. would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.
Sample Outline

First Paragraph: What does it mean?

In English, my name means ____________________. In _______________, it means ____________________. It means ____________________, it means ____________________. It means ____________________, it means ____________________. It is like _________________________________. A ____________________. It is _________________________________.

Second Paragraph: Where does it originate from (come from)? A specific family member, famous person, book, movie, or thing?

It was ____________________ name and now it is mine. He/she/it was ____________________. (A few more sentences about where it comes from).

Third (and fourth if you want) Paragraph: Transition from your third paragraph by telling a story connected to your name, nickname, the person you were named after, how you were named, etc.

And the story goes _______________________________. (Now tell your story in three to five sentences).

Fourth Paragraph: Go back to your name and what you are called. For example, explain nicknames that you are called or names you don’t like to be called. Who are you known as? In the end go back to the meaning of your name or create a name you would rather be called.

At _____________, I am called ____________________. To ________________, I am ____________________, ________________ or ________________. But I am always ____________ (Your name or special name). (Now finish by explaining how your name defines you or by giving yourself a new name and explaining why it fits you better).